

# Research on the Translation of Marine Culture in Guangxi

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to understand the existing recorded marine culture items and their current translations, and to further promote and facilitate the inheritance and transmission of the marine culture in Guangxi. Through literature or documents researches, on-site surveys, and pair or group discussions, the researchers summarized three major problems concerning the translation of marine culture items in Guangxi. They are lack of the corresponding English translation, inconsistent translation in different places and the mistranslation of some marine cultural texts or items, together with their typical examples and analyses. Based on the above problems, three corresponding suggestions are presented, including supplementing the translation of the unfinished or neglected marine culture-related items, unifying the inconsistent translation of some marine cultural items and promoting the translator's comprehensive qualities. With the collaborative efforts of the authoritative government, culture or the departments related to tourism and translators, it will be improved gradually the translation of marine culture in Guangxi.

**Keywords:** Translation, Marine culture, Guangxi, Problems, Strategies.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Marine culture, derived from the ocean, is one of the indispensable components of material civilization and spiritual civilization of human beings, which is the accumulation and summary of human being's behaviors, materials, social practices, and spiritual wealth formed in human's exploitation and utilization of the ocean [1]. In June 2020, the People's Government of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region stated in the "Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Marine Economy and Promoting the Construction of Strong Marine Area" that Guangxi's marine culture should be revitalized by inheriting, developing and transmitting marine culture. Therefore, this research on the translation and transmission of marine culture in Guangxi is critical and meaningful.

The researches on the translation and transmission of marine culture are one of the popular ways of cultural exchange and promotion. The inclusiveness, affinity, and cohesion of marine culture should be fully exerted to bridge the regions and countries along the "One Belt and One Road." The international transmission of marine culture in Guangxi will be one significant part in constructing the "grand culture" and help build the

cultural circle in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

## 2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In recent years, with the proposal and advancement of Maritime Power Strategy and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road Strategy, the construction and development of China's marine culture have attracted the attention of the state, relevant cultural and tourism departments, domestic and foreign academic circles. Foreign academicians have focused more on the theory of sea power, political issues, and ecological issues, while domestic scholars concern themselves with marine culture, oceanography, marine history, marine religion, marine politics, and other multidisciplinary fields. Marine culture, marine consciousness, and the marine cultural industry have been the new focus in recent years [2]. Meanwhile, with the improvement of the global strategic status of the ocean, safeguarding national maritime rights and interests, building the Maritime Silk Road and a harmonious marine society have become the important strategic objectives of China's construction of maritime power. New researching topics, such as marine ecological civilization, maritime power, and the Maritime Silk

Road have gradually become essential fields for scholars. Although researches on marine culture are numerous, studies on regional marine cultural translation and transmission to overseas are relatively insufficient. Therefore, under the Maritime Power Strategy, the study on the translation and transmission of the marine culture in Guangxi, which has a long-standing history, rich connotation, and distinctive cultural elements, is innovative and significant.

### **3. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF MARINE CULTURE TRANSLATION IN GUANGXI**

Guangxi is a coastal region in China. With Beihai, Qinzhou, and Fangchenggang as its major coastal cities, it has a rich, splendid, long-standing and propound marine culture. To be specific, marine culture can be divided into marine history, national marine culture, border culture, marine ecological culture, marine folk culture, etc. [3]. Till January 2021, there are 31 sea-related items on the list of intangible cultural heritage at or above Guangxi Autonomous Region level. The new listed items include the custom sea-opening ceremony in Beihai, the custom of fishing for shrimp on stilts of the Jing nationality, the custom of racking up dragon boats on the sea in Beihai, the skill of making sand crab juice in Beihai, the Qinzhou sea-song, the Qinzhou ship-building art, and the Sanpo worships. To know the existing recorded marine culture items and their translations, the research team has conducted on-site surveys in some places and has organized group discussions to study and classify the collected data. After careful analyses and intensive researches, three major problems concerning English translation of marine culture item in Guangxi are summarized, including the lack of the corresponding English translation, inconsistent translation and the mistranslation of some marine culture items or texts [4]. The following are detailed analyses and discussions of the problems mentioned above.

#### ***3.1. Lack of the Corresponding English Translation of Some Marine Culture Items***

On-site surveys have been conducted in many places loaded with rich marine cultures, such as local museums such as Hepu Han Culture Museum, Beihai Museum, Dongxing Jing Nationality Ecological Museum; mangrove wetland reserves; historical sites such as Hepu Han tombs groups, Ming Dynasty Wenchang Pagoda, Straw Shoe Village Ruins; public parks and gardens and famous tourist sites including Beihai Silver Beach, Aquariums, Weizhou Island, minority exhibition areas and so on. All marine culture-related texts in those places have been carefully collected, classified, and examined. It is noted that the marine culture items in those places are relatively

scattered and their corresponding English translations are not fully covered, especially in ethnic minority areas such as Danjia culture in Beihai and Jing Minority culture in Fangchenggang. The researching findings show that their evolving history, folk customs, special rituals, living habits, life necessities, ways of living, and even languages formed over a long period partly are written in choreographies but often lack the corresponding English translation accessible to the public, and part of them are even not recorded in written form. This phenomenon certainly makes it challenging for foreigners to understand, experience, and transmit the local minority culture.

#### ***3.2. Inconsistent Translation of Some Marine Cultural Items***

Some marine culture terms have inconsistent English translations in different places, indicating that those marine culture items are not normalized and standardized as there are no authoritative departments to conduct unified management. For example, there are Danjia people along the coast of Guangxi, especially in Beihai, referring to people living on the water and making a living by fishing. They float on the sea or river all the year round to make their livings just like eggs for many years, so they are called "Dan" people (similar to the egg in pronunciation but different in its writing in Chinese). At present, three different translations of Danjia have been found: Danjia, Tanka, and egg family. Strictly speaking, Danjia is the transliteration of this marine culture-loaded term. It is acceptable as this is the best way to reserve the specialty and uniqueness of this term. Tanka is the second translation, defined as an unrhymed Japanese verse form of five lines by Merriam-Webster, which is one of the poetry forms. There are no clear and persuasive explanations on and off the internet to why Danjia can be translated into Tanka. Danjia is translated into "egg family" in the last version. However, egg family sounds awkward even for domestic readers. This translation does not belong to a literal translation as their forms in Chinese are different. As an indispensable minority in Guangxi, the translation of Danjia is strongly recommended to be unified. Another example is the translation of the historical site "San Huang Miao", which was built during the reign of the Xianfeng emperor in the Qing Dynasty but destroyed in 1930. There were the Gods of Heaven, Earth, and Human here for religious rituals and people's worships. However, it has two different translations: San Huang Miao (transliteration) and Three Gods Temple (literal translation). Anyway, the translations of some particular marine culture-loaded terms had better be unified to facilitate their transmission.

### 3.3. Mistranslation of Marine Cultural Texts or Items

By analyzing the collected data, the mistranslations of marine culture items can be divided into two categories: linguistic errors and pragmatic errors. Specifically, linguistic errors include wrong spelling, improper capitalization, punctuation, typography, wrong

words, and grammatical mistakes. Pragmatic errors contain cultural information loss, redundant translation, Chinese-style English, and distorted meaning. Some typical examples will be listed for discussions. For example, in the Danjia living area, there are sculptures with the bilingual introduction of Danjia people, showing their living style. Their translations are listed as follows:

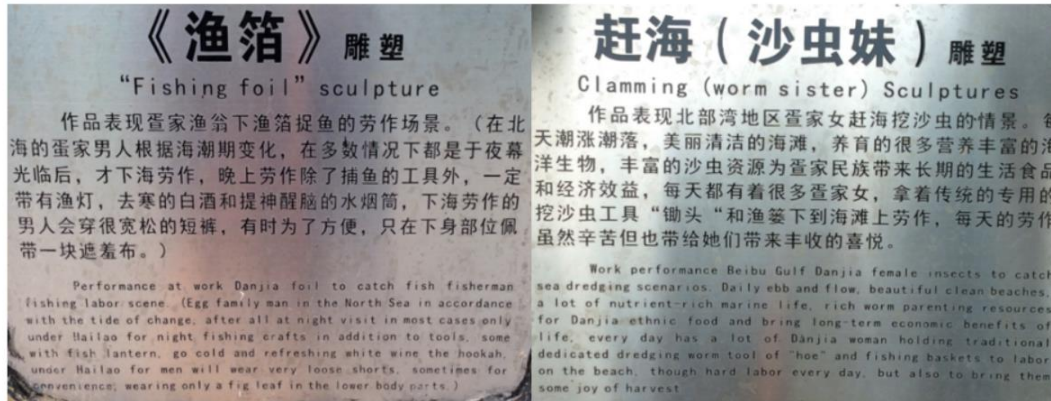


Figure 1 The pictures taken from Danjia Village.

**Example 1:** Work performance Beibu Gulf Danjia female insects to catch sea dredging scenarios. Daily ebb and flow, beautiful clean beaches, a lot of nutrient-rich marine life, rich worm parenting resources for Danjia ethnic food and bring long-term economic benefits of every day has a lot of, Danjia woman holding traditional dedicated dredging worm tool of "hoe" and fishing baskets to labor on the beach, though hard labor every day, but also to bring them some joy of harvest.

**Example 2:** Performance at work Danjia foil to catch fish fisherman fishing labor scene. (Egg family man in the North Sea in accordance with the tide of change, after all at night visit in most cases only under Hailao for night fishing crafts in addition to tools, some with fish lantern, go cold and refreshing white wine the hookah, under Hailao for men will wear very loose shorts, sometimes for convenience, wearing only a fig leaf in the lower body parts.)

Those translations are of low quality, filled with many mistakes, such as the inconsistent tenses in the whole paragraph, inaccurate predicates, improper punctuation and modifiers, wrong translation of certain words, etc., which makes their translation awkward and hard to follow. Foreigners will fail to understand their cultural connotations, let alone accept them, assimilate and transmit them.

## 4. SUGGESTIONS ON THE MISTRANSLATION OF MARINE CULTURE-LOADED TERMS

Marine culture with rich and deep connotations has witnessed the coastal economic development and social movement in Guangxi, whose value is beyond words' description. Its inheritance and transmission deserve emphasis. Regarding the problems mentioned above, some suggested strategies are presented.

### 4.1. Supplement of the Translation of the Unfinished or Neglected Marine Culture-related Items

Regarding the incomplete translation of marine culture-related items and texts in Guangxi, researchers need further collect and verify their existing bilingual translations in great detail and then invite relative experts to supplement the missing parts or encourage translation enthusiasts to provide their versions as alternative choices. The proper translation of some exclusive, unique, and endangered marine culture items accessible to the public need to be given top priorities. The bilingual translations of cultural items should be provided fully in public places such as local museums, places of interest, magazines, and online or live culture programs as they usually serve as the windows to exhibit the profound culture for the world.

#### **4.2. Unify the Inconsistent Translation of Some Marine Cultural Items**

The inconsistent translation of some marine culture-loaded items is mainly attributed to the fact that there is no authoritative organization to coordinate relative departments. Under the local government administration, the translation of specific culture items should be planned, implemented, verified, and released to the public in a unified way. Besides, the departments such as museums, the cultural affairs departments, tourist bureaus, and the masses should have free access to those bilingual culture items, and those organizations must conform to the only official versions. Anyone who disobeys this should be punished. Once the official and unified version is accessible to the public, the inconsistent translation will be fewer and fewer.

However, as the translation of marine culture is of great significance for enhancing cultural confidence for local people and transmitting Chinese culture to the world, local governments and relative departments should make great endeavors to perfect the translation of marine culture. First of all, they can emphasize the necessity and importance of translation for the inheritance and development of marine culture to raise the public's awareness and willingness to protect and spread their culture. In addition, they can establish official and stable operating platforms [5] to propagate the marine culture in Guangxi to the public by using modern information technologies such as the We-chat official platform and live webcasts to launch special bilingual culture programs or release bilingual programs regularly. At last, they can establish a marine cultural translation fund and reward mechanism to encourage more people to get involved in marine culture translation and produce more high-qualified translations. Still, they can provide more supports to local universities to nurture more backup talents for translation.

#### **4.3. Promote the Translator's Comprehensive Qualities**

The mistranslations mentioned above are mainly attributed to the translator's attitudes and comprehensive qualities. Successful translations depend on the translator's profound knowledge, excellent bilingual language proficiency, cross-culture awareness, translation competency, and prudent attitude. As translators, no matter professional ones or amateurs, they need to read and experience more to broaden their horizons by all means. Rich Encyclopedia knowledge is helpful for translators to comprehend the original texts fully and translate texts with high acceptability and readability. In addition, they should constantly promote their language proficiency by enhancing language acquisition and improve their cross-cultural awareness

to avoid linguistic mistakes and cultural taboos or culture shocks. Besides, they need to acquire the classic and emerging translation theories to update their professional knowledge, based on which they can adopt appropriate translation strategies in dealing with cultural-related texts in different categories [6]. Still, translators should develop a prudent and rigorous attitude, taking every translation seriously and shoulder the responsibility as cultural ambassadors to inherit and transmit the splendid Chinese culture to the world.

### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

Under the Maritime Power Strategy of China and the Belt and Road Initiative, the marine culture of Guangxi is attracting an increasing number of people by its uniqueness, diversities and richness. As an indispensable part of Chinese culture, it shall be seen, experienced, understood, and appreciated by the world by overcoming language barriers. They are essential for the survival and transmission of marine culture for professional backup translation talents, timely and accurate translations, and modern propagation channels such as various new media. In a word only with collaborative efforts, the marine culture in Guangxi can be inherited and transmitted successfully.

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